



Date: June 18, 2009

To: All Legislative Offices

From: Michael Gunning, Legislative Advocate
Personal Insurance Federation of California (PIFC)

Re: **California Fire Season 2009—Preparedness Information for Your Constituents**

With the 2009 wildfire season having officially started in California, it is important that we equip as many people as possible with information about how to protect themselves and their homes from wildfire and to be knowledgeable about resources available to them should a wildfire damage or destroy their home or property.

Our member companies (State Farm, Farmers, 21st Century, Liberty Mutual, Allstate and Progressive) are proud of the response they make to help people and families rebuild their lives following disasters. PIFC is equally as committed to being your key source of information any time you get insurance-related questions from your constituents.

To that end, we have attached the documents detailed below containing information regarding wildfire preparedness and protection that we think will be of interest to the people in your district. In particular, we want to emphasize the importance of people doing a home inventory. Having a list of personal possessions makes the claims process go much smoother when disaster strikes. We provide a link below to a site to help walk people through the home inventory process.

Please feel free to share any of this information with your constituents in your district newsletter or on your website.

- **Home Inventory Online Resource:** The Insurance Information Network of California (IINC) has a link for people to download software to do a home inventory. The link is located at <http://www.knowyourstuff.org/>.
- **Wildfire Protection/Preparedness Tips:** Smart steps to take to protect your property and plan for disaster.
- **Information on Additional Living Expenses (ALE):** ALE may be available for victims forced from their homes due to a mandatory evacuation or if their home is destroyed. ALE covers things such as hotel expenses and food.
- **Laws Protecting Fire Victims:** A list of the legal protections for disaster victims, including one law that makes certain that homeowners will not have a policy cancelled as a result of a claim.
- **Company Claims Contact Numbers:** Who to call to initiate a claim if a wildfire strikes.

If you have any additional questions, please contact Ermelinda Ruiz (eruiz@pifc.org) at 916-214-4211. Or you can have your Communications Director contact PIFC's Communications Director, Dan Edwards, at dedwards@pifc.org or 916-442-6646.



Wildfire Protection/Preparedness Tips

- Clear all flammable vegetation within 100 feet of your house.
- Cut small trees and brush to leave widely spaced, larger trees. Maintain a well-pruned landscape.
- Trim tree limbs hanging over your house.
- Clean all needles and leaves from the roof, eaves, and rain gutters.
- Maintain a well-watered landscape or use drought-resistant plants that won't increase your fire risk.
- Select low-growing and less-flammable plants when landscaping your home.
- Plant larger trees no closer than six feet from the structure.
- Treat wood shingle roofs with fire retardants on a regular basis.
- If you build a new home or re-roof your present home, use fire-retardant roofing materials and adhere to upgraded building codes designed to provide houses greater protection against fire.
- Ensure your address is clearly marked and visible to emergency responders.
- Maintain access to your home and property to enable firefighters and their equipment to quickly reach a fire.
- Do a home inventory – online resource at <http://www.knowyourstuff.org/>.
- Families should prepare an emergency supply kit and develop a plan to respond in an emergency. Practice your plan so that everyone will remember what to do. Everyone in the home, including children, should play a part in the family's response and recovery efforts. Remember: make the plan simple and easy to understand. You can find a list of emergency supplies you should have at http://www.nfpa.org/assets/files//PDF/Research/GR/hand/e/Supplies_Kit_Checklist.pdf.

If you have any additional questions, please contact Ermelinda Ruiz (eruiz@pifc.org) at 916-214-4211.



Additional Living Expenses (ALE) for Fire Victims

Homeowners may be eligible for reimbursement from their insurance company for additional living expenses (ALE) that are necessary because of a mandatory evacuation or if a person's home is destroyed.

ALE coverage is generally already included in the homeowners' policy and, therefore, is available following a disaster to help homeowners maintain their normal standard of living while they go through the claims and rebuilding process.

ALE typically covers:

- Housing/hotel expenses
- Extra food expenses
- Furniture rental expenses
- Relocation expenses
- Storage expenses
- Telephone installation expenses
- Extra school and work transportation expenses

People must contact their insurance carrier to be certain as to what is specifically covered by ALE in their homeowners' policy.

Businesses may also be eligible for reimbursement due to lost business.

ALE coverage is guaranteed by law for up to 24 months after a declared disaster.

Please contact Ermelinda Ruiz (eruiz@pifc.org) at 916-214-4211 if you have any questions about ALE.



Laws Protecting Disaster Victims

It is important for disaster victims to know that they **will not have their policy cancelled as a result of a claim**. It is prohibited by law (AB 2962-Pavley: Chapter 357 of the 2004 Statutes) for an insurer to cancel a policy prior to reconstruction and an insurer must offer to renew the policy immediately following a disaster. Additional laws as noted below were enacted in 2005 and 2004 to protect consumers – laws that insurance companies adhere to closely to protect and serve their customers when tragedy strikes.

2005

SB 2 (Speier) – Homeowners' Insurance: Valuation: Continuing Education. Chapter 447 of the 2005 Statutes. Provides that if a state of emergency has been declared, coverage for additional living expenses (ALE) shall be for a period of 24 months. Requires an insurer to provide an ALE claimant with a list of items the insurer believes may be covered.

2004

AB 2199 (Kehoe) – Fire Insurance: Indemnity. Chapter 311 of the 2004 Statutes. Requires payment of the replacement cost for a loss. The measure of indemnity in fire insurance is the amount that it would cost the insured to repair, rebuild or replace the thing lost or injured, without a deduction for physical depreciation. Allows at least 12 months to rebuild and still receive replacement costs, with opportunity for a six-month extension, and no less than 24 months in the case of a declared disaster.

AB 2962 (Pavley) – Fire Insurance: Valuation of Loss. Chapter 605 of the 2004 Statutes. Following a total loss, insurers are prohibited from cancelling a policy prior to reconstruction and are required to offer to renew the policy immediately following a disaster.

SB 64 (Speier) – Homeowners' Insurance. Chapter 357 of the 2004 Statutes. Expands the CDI's mediation program to include claims from residential property insurance losses resulting from declared states of emergency.

SB 1855 (Alpert) – Homeowners' Insurance: Liability Limits: Disclosure. Chapter 385 of the 2004 Statutes. Modifies the California Residential Property Insurance Disclosure Form insurers are required to provide to policyholders. Adds a new disclosure requirement known as the California Residential Property Insurance Bill of Rights.

Please contact Ermelinda Ruiz (eruiz@pifc.org) at 916-214-4211 if you have any additional questions about these laws.



Insurance Company Phone Numbers For Fire Victims to File a Claim

21st Century (800) 322-8200

AIG (877)-244-0304

Allied (800) 282-1446

Allstate (800) 54-STORM (547-8676)

American International Insurance Company of California (888) 760-9195

American National Property and Casualty Company (800) 333-2860

Amica Mutual Insurance Co. (800) 242-6422

Auto Club of Southern California (Inter-Insurance Exchange) (800) 672-5246

Balboa Insurance Group/Balboa Insurance Company/Newport Insurance Company/Meritplan Insurance Company (888) 768-2096

California Casualty (800) 800-9410

Century-National Insurance Co. (800) 733-1980

Chubb (800) 252-4670

Civil Service Employees Insurance Company (800) 282-6848

CNA (877) CNA-ASAP (262-2727)

Electric Insurance Company (800) 227-2757

Farmers (800) HelpPoint (435-7764)

Foremost (800) 527-3907

Fireman's Fund Insurance Company (888) FIRE-HAT (347-3428)

GeoVera and GeoVera Specialty Insurance Company (800) 631-6478

IDS Property Casualty Insurance Company (Ameriprise) (800) 872-5246

Kemper Insurance (888) 252-2799

Lexington (800) 931-9546

Liberty Mutual (800) 713-7379

MetLife Auto & Home (800) 854-6011

National Interstate Insurance (800) 929-0870

Nationwide/Allied (800) 282-1446

Oregon Mutual (800) 888-2141

Pacific Specialty Insurance (800) 828-3003

Progressive (800) 776-4737

Safeco (800) 332-3226

State Farm (800) SFCLAIM (732-5246)

USAA (800) 531-8722

Wawanesa Mutual Insurance Company (800) 572-5246

Please contact Ermelinda Ruiz (eruiz@pifc.org) at 916-214-4211 if you have any questions about these contact numbers.